

What is claimed is:

1. An improved throw rod for a rail switch, comprising:  
an elongate rod having a first end and a second end;  
a cylinder connected to the first end;  
a piston connected to the second end, wherein the piston is slidably mounted within the cylinder;  
a restraining mechanism connected to the piston and cylinder to prevent movement of the piston within the cylinder; and  
at least one spring within the cylinder and connected to the piston, wherein movement of the piston within the cylinder is limited when the restraining mechanism is removed.
2. The throw rod of Claim 1, wherein the restraining mechanism comprises a pin extending through a wall of the cylinder and through the piston.
3. The throw rod of Claim 1, wherein the cylinder contains two springs, one at each end of the piston.